

# **2013-14 Budget Estimates**

**Report No. 17**

**Education and Innovation Committee**

**August 2013**



## EDUCATION AND INNOVATION COMMITTEE

**Chair** Mrs Rosemary Menkens MP, Member for Burdekin

**Deputy Chair** Mrs Desley Scott MP, Member for Woodridge

**Members** Mr Steve Bennett MP, Member for Burnett  
Mr Mark Boothman MP, Member for Albert  
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### Acknowledgements

The committee wishes to acknowledge the assistance provided by the Department of Education, Training and Employment and the Department of Science, Information Technology, Innovation and the Arts during the course of the committee's inquiry.

## Chair's Foreword

This report presents a summary of the committee's examination of the Budget Estimates for the 2013-14 financial year.

Consideration of the Budget Estimates allows for the public examination of both the responsible Minister and Chief Executive Officers of agencies within the committee's portfolio area. This was undertaken through analysis of the budget papers, questions on notice and the public hearing process.

The committee has recommended that the proposed expenditure, as detailed in the Appropriation Bill 2013 for the portfolios of Education, Training, Employment, Science, Information Technology, Innovation and the Arts be agreed to by the Legislative Assembly without amendment.

On behalf of the committee, I wish to thank the Minister for Education, Training and Employment and the Minister for Science, Information Technology, Innovation and the Arts, and their departmental officers for their cooperation in providing information to the committee throughout this process.

I would also like to thank the other members of the committee and the committee's research staff for their hard work and valuable contribution.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Rosemary Menkens". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looping initial 'R'.

Rosemary Menkens MP

**Chair**

August 2013

## 1. Introduction

### 1.1 Role of the committee

The Education and Innovation Committee (the committee) is a portfolio committee of the Queensland Parliament required under section 88 of the *Parliament of Queensland Act 2001* and established under the Standing Rules and Orders.

The committee's areas of responsibility are:

- Education, Training and Employment; and
- Science, Information Technology, Innovation and the Arts.<sup>1</sup>

On 4 June 2013, the Appropriation Bill 2013 and the estimates for the committee's area of responsibility were referred to the committee for investigation and report.<sup>2</sup>

On 23 July 2013, the committee conducted a public hearing and took evidence about the proposed expenditure from the Minister for Education, Training and Employment, the Minister for Science, Information Technology, Innovation and the Arts, Directors-General, senior officials of the relevant departments and Chief Executive Officers listed in Schedule 7 of the Standing Rules and Orders. A copy of the transcript of the committee's hearing can be accessed at: [http://www.parliament.qld.gov.au/documents/hansard/2013/2013\\_07\\_23\\_EstimatesEIC.pdf](http://www.parliament.qld.gov.au/documents/hansard/2013/2013_07_23_EstimatesEIC.pdf)

### 1.2 Aim of this report

The committee considered the estimates referred to it by using information contained in:

- budget papers;
- answers to pre-hearing questions on notice;
- evidence taken at the hearing;
- additional information given in relation to answers.

This report summarises the estimates referred to the committee and highlights some of the issues the committee examined.

Prior to the public hearing, the committee provided the Ministers with questions on notice in relation to the estimates. Responses to all the questions were received.

Answers to the committee's pre-hearing questions on notice; documents tabled during the hearing; answers and additional information provided by Ministers after the hearing; and minutes of the committee's meetings are included in a volume of additional information tabled with this report.

### 1.3 Participation by other Members

The committee granted leave for the following Members to participate in the hearing:

- Ms Anastacia Palaszczuk MP, Member for Inala;
- Mr Tim Mulherin MP, Member for Mackay; and
- Ms Jackie Trad MP, Member for South Brisbane.

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<sup>1</sup> Standing Rules and Orders, Schedule 6. The schedule provides that departments, statutory authorities, government owned corporations or other administrative units related to the relevant Minister's responsibilities regarding these areas are included.

<sup>2</sup> Standing Order 177 provides for the automatic referral of the Annual Appropriation Bills to portfolio committees once the Bills have been read a second time.

## 2. Recommendation

Pursuant to Standing Order 187(1), the committee must state whether the proposed expenditures referred to it are agreed to.

### **Recommendation 1**

The committee recommends that the proposed expenditure, as detailed in the Appropriation Bill 2013 for the committee's areas of responsibility, be agreed to by the Legislative Assembly without amendment.

## 3. Department of Education, Training and Employment

The Minister for Education, Training and Employment has ministerial responsibility for the portfolios administered by the Department of Education, Training and Employment (DETE).

DETE has the following three service areas:

- Early Childhood Education and Care – provides access to quality early childhood education and care.
- School Education – delivers Prep to Year 12 in Queensland state schools and administers funding and registration for non-state schools.
- Training, Tertiary Education and Employment – funds, delivers and ensures quality of vocational education and training and provides advice and support to improve workforce participation.<sup>3</sup>

The Minister's areas of responsibility are administered through DETE and a number of statutory authorities, including the Queensland Studies Authority (QSA), Skills Queensland and TAFE Queensland. At the time of preparation of the 2013-2014 State Budget, these statutory authorities included the Gold Coast Institute of TAFE (GCIT) and Southbank Institute of Technology (SBIT).<sup>4</sup> The *TAFE Queensland Act 2013* provides the legislative framework for GCIT and SBIT to cease operation as statutory bodies and transition to TAFE Queensland, an independent statutory body and public provider of vocational education and training. The transition will be reported in the 2014-2015 Service Delivery Statements.<sup>5</sup>

In accordance with Schedule 7 of the Standing Orders of the Legislative Assembly, the Chief Executive Officers of the QSA and TAFE Queensland attended the estimates hearing.

The committee noted the absence of the chief executive officer of Skills Queensland. The Minister advised that, as Skills Queensland is to be abolished, the chief executive officer position was not filled after the resignation of the former chief executive officer on 21 June 2013. The Minister requested that any questions for Skills Queensland be directed to him.

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<sup>3</sup> State Budget 2013-14, Service Delivery Statements – Department of Education, Training and Employment, p 11

<sup>4</sup> State Budget 2013-14, Service Delivery Statements – Department of Education, Training and Employment, pp 38 & 54

<sup>5</sup> State Budget 2013-14, Service Delivery Statements – Department of Education, Training and Employment, pp 38 & 54

The following table taken from the Appropriation Bill 2013 compares the appropriations for the department for 2012-13 and 2013-14.

<b>Appropriations</b>	<b>2012-13 \$'000</b>	<b>2013-14 \$'000</b>
<i>Controlled Items</i>		
departmental services	7 626 802	7 931 608
equity adjustment	(107 222)	(9 081)
<i>Administered Items</i>	2 611 162	2 739 315
<b>Vote</b>	<b>10 130 742</b>	<b>10 661 842</b>

**Source:** Appropriation Bill 2013, Schedule 2, p 8

In 2013-14, budgeted capital purchases for the department and statutory authorities total \$556.1 million.<sup>6</sup>

This total includes \$506.4 million for DETE to dedicate to education (including early childhood education) and \$29.7 million for DETE to dedicate to training.<sup>7</sup>

Budgeted capital purchases for statutory authorities total \$20 million which is made up of \$15.6 million for the GCIT; \$2.8 million for the SBIT and \$1.6 million for the QSA.<sup>8</sup>

### 3.1 Budget highlights

2013-14 budget highlights for DETE include:

- Investment of:
  - \$158.5 million to commence planning for a new secondary school at Highfields, undertake staged works at 10 schools, buy land and provide additional classrooms at existing schools in growth areas, as well as to commence the new Queensland Schools Public Private Partnerships project;
  - \$173.2 million to continue preparations to introduce Year 7 as the first year of secondary schooling from 2015 by building, refurbishing and reconfiguring state school classrooms and flexible learning areas;
  - \$25.1 million to continue the delivery of the Australian Government Trade Training Centres in Schools Program;
  - \$39.6 million to establish an additional 33 new kindergarten services by the end of 2014;
  - \$1 million as part of \$4 million over four years in additional funding to implement the Step Up into Education program to better prepare children for school;
  - \$537 million over five years, starting with an initial investment of \$1.2 million in 2014, to implement Great Teachers = Great Results;
  - \$100 million to meet maintenance backlogs in Queensland state schools;
  - \$4.9 million for 60 state schools to participate in the Independent Public Schools initiative as part of additional total funding of \$21 million over four years;
  - up to \$6 million as part of the second year of a four year program to roll out the equivalent of a full-time teacher aide to an additional 150 prep classes each year; and
  - \$250,000 as part of \$1 million over four years to support Queensland schools with access to chaplaincy and student welfare services.

<sup>6</sup> State Budget 2013-14, Capital Statement – Budget Paper No. 3, p 32

<sup>7</sup> State Budget 2013-14, Capital Statement – Budget Paper No. 3, p 18

<sup>8</sup> State Budget 2013-14, Capital Statement – Budget Paper No. 3, pp 43-44

- Continuation of investment of:
  - more than \$8 million in early years centres;
  - \$3.2 million of \$10.9 million over four years under the Supporting Queenslanders with a Disability (Speech Pathologists) initiative;
  - \$6.5 million in state and non-state schools as part of \$26 million over four years in Getting the Basics Right – Literacy and Numeracy grants;
  - up to \$3.2 million as part of \$10 million for the Supporting Women Scholarships initiative over four years; and
  - \$1 million over three years to sponsor delegations of Queensland secondary school students to travel to ANZAC Day ceremonies;
- Finalisation of 10 children and family centres under the Australian government’s \$75 million Indigenous Early Childhood Development National Partnership Agreement;
- Implementation of:
  - recommendations from the Teacher Education Implementation Taskforce; and
  - the government’s response to the Queensland Skills and Training Taskforce final report;
- Allocation of 724 teachers and teacher aides in response to enrolment growth and students with special needs in state schools;
- Continued implementation of the Australian Curriculum in English, Maths, Science and History;
- Provision of \$1 million over four years to continue an education program for all Queensland schools to give children the knowledge to protect themselves and encourage reporting of suspected abuses;
- Review of the QSA and the senior assessment and tertiary entrance system; and
- Merger of Central Queensland Institute of TAFE with Central Queensland University.

### **3.2 Issues raised at the public hearing**

Issues raised at the hearing in relation to budget estimates for the education, training and employment portfolio include:

- The Queensland Plan and its place in Queensland schools;
- Government funding allocated to the Great Teachers = Great Results initiative, including for advertising;
- Support and benefits provided to new teachers and struggling schools through the government’s Great Teachers = Great Results initiative;
- Identification, support, reward and retention of high-performing teachers;
- Existing professional development measures to upskill teachers;
- Funding provided to non-state schools and steps taken to improve teacher quality in that sector;
- Schools Planning Commission growth data, demand maps and asset management strategy including discussion of the data used to inform demand mapping;
- Full time equivalent teaching positions required to accommodate enrolment growth;
- Proposed merger of Brisbane State High and Coorparoo Secondary College;
- Proposed investment in modern training infrastructure;
- Government cash flow sourced from the sale of assets, including property, plant and equipment;
- Sale of premises previously occupied by the Brisbane School of Distance Education;
- Sale of department-owned residential property at Emerald and teacher housing demand in remote locations;

- Possible closure and sale of various state schools, including Fortitude Valley State School, estimated resulting revenue and related community consultation issues;
- Closure of the School for Travelling Show Children;
- Steps underway to improve discipline in Queensland schools, including student weekend detention and support for schools to make local decisions about disciplinary issues;
- Initiatives to assist students with complex discipline issues;
- The Independent Public Schools program, including the benefits of improved autonomy;
- Additional autonomy for schools to undertake maintenance work and the related financial benefits;
- Early childhood education and care expenditure;
- Participation targets for kindergartens and funding allocations for kindergarten grants programs;
- Indigenous enrolment targets for children in early childhood education programs;
- Continued investment in early years centres across various communities, and the evidence supporting the benefits of these centres;
- Queensland's commitment to children and family centres under the National Partnership for Indigenous Early Childhood Development;
- Year 7 inclusion in secondary school and the effect on schools in remote areas;
- Rationale for the Community Learning program;
- Government funding available to those wishing to study higher level qualifications;
- Incentives to Year 12 graduates to enrol in study and training leading to high priority qualifications;
- Plans for increasing the proportion of young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders participating in education, training or employment immediately after completing year 12;
- Queensland's commitment to the National Partnership Agreement on Skills Reform;
- Funding priorities for the Vocational Education and Training (VET) investment framework and Great Skills. Real Opportunities.;
- Changes to the VET sector, including the establishment of TAFE Queensland to operate in a contestable market;
- Proposed enterprise bargaining agreement for VET staff;
- VET budget;
- Supporting Women scholarships initiative;
- Investment to support 10 000 apprentices under the Pathways to a Skilled Trade Future initiative;
- Attracting new apprentices;
- School based apprenticeships and trainees;
- Cessation of the Skilling Queenslanders for Work program;
- TAFE Queensland funding, full-time equivalent staff positions, student support services and ability to compete with Registered Training Organisations (RTOs);
- Respective professional standards for TAFE Queensland and RTOs, and maintaining TAFE Queensland standards in a contestable environment;
- Regulatory oversight of private sector RTOs;
- TAFE Queensland and RTO access to former TAFE facilities;
- Sale of TAFE assets;

- The role of the Minister in respect of job growth and unemployment data; and
- Implementation of the joint government and industry skilling response for areas impacted by ex-Tropical Cyclone Oswald.

#### 4. Department of Science, Information Technology, Innovation and the Arts

The Minister for Science, Information Technology, Innovation and the Arts has ministerial responsibility for the portfolios administered by the Department of Science, Information Technology, Innovation and the Arts (DSITIA).

DSITIA has four service areas as follows:

- Science delivery services;
- Innovation and science development services;
- Queensland government information and communication technology services; and
- Arts and culture services.<sup>9</sup>

The Minister's areas of responsibility are administered through DSITIA and a number of statutory authorities and entities. The statutory authorities are the Queensland Art Gallery, Queensland Museum, Queensland Performing Arts Trust, Queensland Theatre Company, the State Library of Queensland and Screen Queensland Pty Ltd.

The entities are the Queensland government Chief Information Office and the Office of the Queensland Chief Scientist. Other DSITIA agencies include CITEC, Queensland Shared Services and the Corporate Administration Agency.<sup>10</sup>

In accordance with Schedule 7 of the Standing Orders of the Legislative Assembly, the Chief Executive Officers of the statutory authorities attended the estimates hearing.

The following table taken from the Appropriation Bill 2013 compares the appropriations for the department for 2012-13 and 2013-14.

<b>Appropriations</b>	<b>2012-13 \$'000</b>	<b>2013-14 \$'000</b>
<i>Controlled Items</i>		
departmental services	382 639	277 881
equity adjustment	(67 740)	(43 491)
<i>Administered Items</i>	153 418	152 516
<b>Vote</b>	<b>468 317</b>	<b>386 906</b>

**Source:** Appropriation Bill 2013, Schedule 2, p. 11

In 2013-14, budgeted capital purchases for DSITIA, including its statutory bodies, commercialised business unit and shared service providers, total \$11.2 million.<sup>11</sup>

This total includes \$5.2 million for DSITIA, which is made up of \$1 million for the upgrade of the Queensland Performing Arts Centre, \$2.9 million for the ongoing replacement of scientific equipment and \$1.3 million for ongoing asset replacement.<sup>12</sup>

<sup>9</sup> State Budget 2013-14, Service Delivery Statements – Department of Science, Information Technology, Information and the Arts, p 1

<sup>10</sup> State Budget 2013-14, Service Delivery Statements – Department of Science, Information Technology, Information and the Arts, pp 1-3

<sup>11</sup> State Budget 2013-14, Capital Statement – Budget Paper No. 3, p 98

<sup>12</sup> State Budget 2013-14, Capital Statement – Budget Paper No. 3, p 99

Budgeted capital purchases for DSITIA agencies total \$6 million which is made up of \$2.1 million for the Library Board of Queensland; \$1.2 million for the Queensland Art Gallery; \$2.5 million for CITEC and \$0.2 million for Queensland Shared Services.<sup>13</sup>

#### 4.1 Budget highlights

2013-14 budget highlights for DSITIA include:

- Investment of:
  - \$2.9 million for the procurement and replacement of essential scientific equipment used for environmental and natural resource projects;
  - \$2.1 million to the Library Board of Queensland for the purchase of heritage and other library collections as well as plant and equipment replacement;
  - \$1 million towards the installation of a supplementary lift at the Queensland Performing Arts Centre and upgrade works to the function spaces; and
  - \$5.1 million to the Australian Institute of Tropical Health and Medicine as part of the \$42.1 million election commitment comprising \$7.8 million in operating and \$34.3 million in capital grants over 3 years.
- Establishment of a long term monitoring station to investigate the emissions profile of coal trains in South East Queensland;
- Launch of the Wastewater Tracking and Electronic Reporting System (WaTERS), a data management system that receives, stores and provides timely reports on water monitoring data;
- Finalisation of the Queensland Science and Innovation Action Plan, which aims to ensure the supply of demand-driven science and remove impediments to business;
- Provision of funding support for the Centre for Ageing and Dementia Research;
- Progression of the One-stop Shop vision to provide access to government services and information;
- Plan for the implementation of a whole-of-government approach to address the long term management of Queensland government digital information assets;
- Drive the Information and Communication Technology (ICT) agenda including the development of the Public Sector ICT Renewal Strategy and Implementation Plan and the Queensland government ICT Portfolio Strategy;
- Finalisation of the ICT action plan and implementation of the recommendations from the audit of Queensland Government IT systems applications and support services;
- Release of the Arts for All Queenslanders Strategy which aims to grow the arts sector, foster a community of the arts and enhance Queensland's reputation as a cultural tourism destination; and
- Implementation of the public service reforms accepted by the government in the Queensland Commission of Audit Final Report which includes developing a framework to assess the contestability of DSITIA's services.

#### 4.2 Issues raised at the public hearing

Issues raised by the committee in relation to science, information technology, innovation and the arts portfolio include:

- Improvement of customers' interaction with the government through One-stop Shop;
- Red tape reduction;

<sup>13</sup> State Budget 2013-14, Capital Statement – Budget Paper No. 3, pp 99-100

- Contestability reform for corporate services;
- Government engagement with the ICT industry;
- Whole-of-government policy, departmental accountability for IT and agency responsibilities;
- Government adoption of cloud based computing services, including employment and security ramifications;
- Ownership and management of ICT assets and systems;
- Costs and risks of IT projects and IT procurement arrangements;
- The planned divestment of CITEC impacts on employment, and government ICT employees generally;
- Funding from other government agencies and return on the department's intellectual property;
- Budget and funding for new science investment and science delivery services, including staffing and project ramifications;
- Support for research into disorders affecting ageing Queenslanders, such as dementia;
- Initiatives to support the life sciences industry;
- Relationship with the Chinese Academy of Sciences, including funding collaboration;
- Use of satellite imagery to map and monitor State resources;
- The Chief Scientist's *Health of Queensland Science* report which provides a snapshot of the state's science capacity and activity, and makes recommendations for the future;
- Delivery of support for other departments by government scientists;
- Development and update of innovative environmental information and role of the department and Minister with respect to a recent incident at the Great Barrier Reef;
- Establishment of the Wastewater Tracking and Electronic Reporting System and pilot release of mine water;
- Facilitation of wastewater compliance by industry under the *Environmental Protection Act 1994*;
- The satisfaction of stakeholders with Innovation and Science Development Services' consultative and engagement processes, and targets in respect of satisfaction levels;
- The possibility of a national approach to expenditure on scientific research and development;
- Growth in regional arts attendance figures attributed to Boost to Touring;
- Cultural highlights;
- Status of various film projects and foreign film project investment in Queensland;
- Attendance and projected attendance data and performance measurement for exhibitions and performances;
- Development of the Arts for all Queenslanders policy by the Arts Investment Advisory Board, focussing on consultation undertaken;
- Delivery of arts and cultural services for regional communities;
- Support for major performing arts companies;
- Expenditure on overseas travel by Arts Queensland staff and staff of related entities;
- Cultural Precinct Strategy, including consultation details;
- Full-time equivalent staffing in the arts and cultural space and sourcing of grants;
- Procurement of federal arts and cultural funding for Queensland;
- Support for Cairns Indigenous Art Fair and Queensland's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander arts and culture;

- Benefits of the Queensland Music Festival for communities across Queensland;
- Delivery of assistance for Queenslanders recovering from Cyclone Oswald through Creative Recovery activities in Bundaberg;
- Cultural sector commercial revenue targets; and
- Management and administration of the Arts Investment Advisory Board.



## **Statement of Reservation**

## **Education and Innovation Committee**

### **Statement of reservation**

This statement of reservation is submitted by the Member for Woodridge on behalf of the Labor Opposition.

### **Minister for Education, Training and Employment**

#### **Education**

From the outset of the Estimates hearing for the Education and Innovation Committee, the Minister for Education, Training and Employment, the Honourable John Paul Langbroek MP, spoke about the need to not be partisan in the area of education. It was disappointing, therefore, that he took every available opportunity to inject a politically partisan comment into his responses to questions both from Government and non-Government members.

#### ***School closures***

The proposed closure of eight Queensland schools was a focus of questioning from the non-Government members at the Estimates Hearing. It was reported on 20 July 2013 that the Premier, the Honourable Campbell Newman MP, had said, 'We have not shut one school to date'. When questioned why the premier was saying this when clearly, the closure of the travelling Show School had been gazetted by Minister Langbroek, the Minister's only response was 'I think the Honourable member had a chance to ask the Premier about that last week'. Unfortunately, at the time of the Premier's Estimates Hearing, the Premier had not made that comment. The Minister deliberately avoided answering the question to protect the Premier from having his untrue statement exposed.

An issue raised with the Director-General related to the allegation that pressure is being placed on the President of the Toowoomba South State School P&C by departmental staff to cease her Facebook and Twitter campaigns to save the school from closure. The Director-General agreed that, should he be provided with further information, he would undertake to investigate that matter. On 25 July 2013, the Leader of the Opposition wrote to the Director-General providing further information and requesting that he investigate her concerns.

It is of some concern that allegations have been made in relation to bullying and intimidation of persons who seek to engage in the democratic process by participating in protests and expressing opposition to the Government.

Last year, community groups were threatened with having funding withdrawn if they spoke against the policies of the government. The Queensland Nurses' Union had been threatened with legal action for breach of copyright in relation to anti-privatisation flyers that are being distributed. It was reported that nurses are being photographed by Human Resources staff as they enter staff meetings to discuss privatisation, hospital closures and contestability. It is important that this matter be

brought to light in the context of a concerted campaign of threats and intimidation against any expression of opposition to the government.

In answering questions about the realisation of \$70 million from proposed asset sales, and the fact that details of only \$38 million had been provided to the committee, the Director-General, in explaining how the other \$32 million in sales would be achieved, stated, 'There certainly is an opportunity for us to consider other surplus land'.

While the sale of surplus land is of concern in some instances, and the issue of land at Emerald will be addressed in more detail later, it is reassuring to know that surplus land is being considered for sale, rather than functioning and operational schools and housing properties. The Opposition seeks an assurance from the Minister that this response from the Director-General is accurate, and only surplus land is being considered for sale at this stage.

The Opposition also asked about the seemingly large number of properties being sold in Emerald, a centre which is experiencing enormous growth and which will have an increasing demand for teacher housing. The response from the Deputy Director-General was that because those properties were not being considered for development at this stage, there is a range of models of housing support for staff that can be implemented. The Opposition also seeks an assurance from the Minister that the provision of staff housing, utilising this range of models, will grow at the same rate as the growth in teacher numbers in the Emerald area, so that the quantity of staff housing continues to be provided in the same proportion as numbers of staff as currently exists.

### ***Schools Planning Commission***

The Minister also released, on the day of the Estimates Hearing, a report of the Schools Planning Commission, looking at school needs over the next 20 to 30 years. It is incomprehensible that the government would be considering the proposed closure of eight schools, and the sale of other school ovals and grounds, without the benefit of the School Planning Commission's deliberations.

Significant problems were identified with this process. It puts the cart before the horse, and considers where schools should be closed before it considers the potential population growth and growth in school demand in those areas.

In relation to the Fortitude Valley State School site, the maps released by the Commission show an estimated population growth in this region of 2 per cent or more over the next 20 years. In addition, the Deputy Director-General clearly indicated that the two closest schools to Fortitude Valley, Brisbane Central and New Farm, 'have enrolments that are close to the built environment capacity at the present time'. So, the schools would not be able to cope with the present students from Fortitude Valley, without even taking into account the potential growth in population in all of the catchment areas of these schools.

The same situation exists at Toowoomba South State School, where the projected population growth will be 1 per cent per annum, and for Charlton and Wyreema,

these areas will experience a growth of 2 per cent or more per annum. Closing schools in areas of projected population growth seems short-sighted at best, and incompetent at worst. Planning school closures without proper planning and population mapping cannot be sustainable, and the school closures should be put on hold until all relevant considerations have been taken into account.

It is disturbing that, in spite of the observation by the Deputy Director-General that the nearby schools to Fortitude Valley are already close to capacity, the Minister insists on repeating that 'whilst there might be population growth... there are other schools that the students may and could potentially attend should the closure go ahead'.

It was also disappointing that the Minister and the Director-General were not across the detail of their policy announcement, made during a break in their Estimates Hearing, regarding schools planning.

### ***Early years***

Funding for early years education is an important part of the responsibility of the State Government. Increasing participation in kindergarten is fundamental to improving education outcomes for Queensland children. That is why the National Partnership Agreement was developed by the State, Territory and Federal Governments to provide Universal Access to Kindergarten.

Given the fact that the target rate under the agreement for 2012 was 86 percent and the Queensland Government has only achieved a rate of 77 per cent, the Opposition asked the Minister to explain how he intended to meet the target of 95 per cent required under the agreement for 2013. Unfortunately, the Minister appeared to have totally misunderstood his Government's responsibility under the agreement. Federal funding has been provided for each year of the agreement, and has been now extended until the end of 2014, and the targets set are in relation to the funding provided. The 95 per cent target is in relation to the funding already committed by the federal government. It is unrelated to what funding agreements occur after 2014.

Furthermore, the budget papers indicate an underspend in early years education of more than \$97 million. The Minister was unable to provide a satisfactory explanation for this underspend and his attempts to shift blame to the Federal Government were unconvincing. The Minister's response that, 'I can promise the honourable member that we will not be getting to our targets unless we get that funding from the Federal Government beyond December 2014' is concerning. Unfortunately, the obligation to reach those targets is a condition of accepting the funding up to 2014. By refusing to accept responsibility for the target, the Minister is thumbing his nose at the National Partnership Agreement. The Opposition is concerned that the LNP Government's failure to reach the target of 86 per cent in 2012 will have an adverse effect on Federal Government funding.

A Departmental briefing note signed by the Minister on 9 April 2013, obtained under RTI, provides the minister with quite uncategorical advice, as evidenced by the statement in the summary of key objectives, which says 'Queensland's 2012 performance may influence post-NP ECE arrangements and funding.' The

Opposition urges the Minister to reassure the committee that the failure by his government to even seek to address the target, and his statement during the Estimates hearing, will have no impact on potential post-NP ECE arrangements and funding.

One of the reasons for the problems experienced by the government in reaching the target is the lack of any new initiatives to increase kindergarten participation rates. The Opposition refers to the Minister's response to Question on Notice No. 1, in which the Minister listed the innovative approaches being implemented by this Government to increase kindergarten participation rates to include:

- E-kindy, a distance kindergarten program for children who are unable to access a centre-based kindy program, such as those living in remote locations, with itinerant lifestyles or with medical conditions;
- Pre-kindergarten grants to assist the transition into kindergarten for children from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and culturally and linguistically diverse families; and
- Removing barriers to participation by providing transport solutions in vulnerable communities.

In contrast, the Opposition draws the committee's attention to Queensland's 2011 Annual Report on the Bilateral Agreement on Achieving Universal Access to Early Childhood Education. This report stated that the government:

- Commissioned Brisbane School of Distance Education to develop an e-kindy distance program for implementation from 2012 as part of the program of activities completed January to December 2011.
- Continued development of specific support initiatives for disadvantaged children, children with a disability, vulnerable children, culturally and linguistically diverse, and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children to alleviate and address barriers for families and their children in accessing, participating in and transitioning to and from kindergarten programs.
- Explored transport and accommodation issues impacting on service viability in rural/remote areas.

The Minister's innovative approaches are merely the innovative approaches of the previous government, as evidenced by the annual report for 2011. If the Minister wishes to increase kindergarten participation rates to achieve the 95 per cent target for 2013, he will need to come up with his own new approaches.

### ***Staffing***

Staffing is, of course, a continued concern. The Member for Woodridge, Desley Scott MP, asked the Minister to explain why the SDS shows an increase of 398 FTEs but the SDS highlights claim an increase of 724 teachers and teacher aides. The Minister explained that there was an increase in teachers in our schools. He explained the discrepancy in numbers by explaining that they had asked some teachers to go back into the classroom.

Resource teachers in high schools and year 2 net positions were the ones that were sacrificed so that the reduction occurred in back-of-house 'to support our teachers on

the front line'. Unfortunately what appears to be outside the understanding of the Minister is that it is exactly those positions such as resource teachers and those providing support for students identified through the year 2 diagnostic net that 'support our teachers on the front line'.

The Member for South Brisbane also questioned the Minister about the process that had been adopted in the consideration of the amalgamation of Brisbane State High School and Coorparoo Secondary College. The Minister explained that the Government 'wanted both parties to be willing participants' and 'realised and found out through (the) consultation that the conditions did not appear to be present'. He therefore decided that the amalgamation should not proceed. Given that the eight school closures are, in all practical respects, an amalgamation of schools, shouldn't the Minister ensure that all schools are 'willing participants' before he proceeds with the closures?

The Opposition notes that the Minister sought to blatantly and deliberately misquote the Member for South Brisbane in relation to her comments about Brisbane State High School, and was required to withdraw those misrepresentations.

The Opposition also draws the committee's attention to the fact that the Minister again stated that the Opposition Leader did not attend any meetings in her own electorate about school closures, a statement he had already made in the Parliament. The Opposition Leader corrected the Minister, advising that she had attended a meeting at Richlands. The Minister undertook to clarify that in Parliament the next time it sits, and the Opposition looks forward to the Minister's clarification on that point.

## **Training**

The Minister was questioned on the government's response to the Queensland Skills and Training Task Force and the new enterprise bargaining offer made to educational employees of TAFE and was unable to identify the expected savings that would result from these actions.

The Minister confirmed that planned changes to TAFEs were about cost-cutting, not about improving services, with \$43.9 million removed from Training, Tertiary Education and Employment this financial year. The Minister initially tried to blame the Federal Government however, when it was confirmed that this was a State funding cut, he conceded it reflected his government's cuts.

When questioned on the cost of transferring TAFE assets and facilities to an independent body, the Minister was unable to indicate the anticipated price of this process or a prediction of the cost of establishing said body.

The Minister deferred to the new TAFE Queensland CEO when questioned about the new job categories in the proposed enterprise bargaining agreement for VET staff and whether this would deter staff from seeking further education. The CEO indicated that staff would be rewarded for providing value for money, not for completing further education.

The CEO emphasised that the professional development strategies around TAFE staff are focused on creating a workforce to compete in the contestable market place and make no reference to providing the most qualified staff or the best education.

The 2013-14 budget papers indicated that the TAFE sector is to lose 422 FTE positions in the current budget period but the Minister was unable to identify how many individuals were to be directly impacted by these cuts or how they were divided between teaching and non-teaching staff. The Minister was also unable to rule out increased class sizes under the new enterprise bargaining agreement.

## **Employment**

The Minister refused to take responsibility for disturbing employment figures under his watch. Employment growth in Queensland in 2012-13 was the weakest in more than two decades. The result as confirmed on Queensland Treasury's website is the weakest since 1990-1991 when the Australian economy was last in recession.

The Minister showed a lack of understanding of employment growth statistics responding that the Treasurer was responsible for unemployment statistics. The Minister stated that he would take credit for a falling unemployment rate but no responsibility for an increasing unemployment rate which can only be described as farcical.

**Mr LANGBROEK:** *I will take that as a comment, but here is something that I absolutely warrant to the honourable member: when unemployment goes down, as I am confident it is going to—*

**Mr MULHERIN:** *You will take credit.*

**Mr LANGBROEK:**—*I will be happy to say that my department, through some of the actions that we put in place, which I am happy to outline for you here today, are ones that helped to contribute as part of a whole-of-government initiative as part of a department absolutely focused on getting to that four per cent unemployment rate within six years. But it will be the Treasurer who will be presenting those statistics and answering about them every month. But I am happy to keep going along this vein, Madam Chair, and I am happy to take the honourable member's observations but to say that we do work very hard in the Employment section of my department. When it comes to the real statistics, they are the ones that the Treasurer deals with every month and I am acutely aware of them and I have them all here.*

The Minister was then asked about the number of unemployed hitting a 15-year high under his government and he once again tried to deny that there was any correlation between the number of unemployed and the number of employed. The Minister joked in response about writing the Opposition's questions, showing a total lack of respect for the 709,300 Queenslanders currently out of a job.

The Minister when questioned about there being 13,700 fewer full-time jobs seasonally adjusted than when the LNP Government was elected, once again

refused to take any responsibility. Instead the Minister attempted to again infer that employment was a Federal responsibility while simultaneously claiming it should stay in his ministerial title.

The seasonally adjusted and trend unemployment rates in Queensland are now higher than during the Global Financial Crisis. The seasonally adjusted unemployment rate is at a decade high at 6.4% with the proportion of people looking for work also in decline.

These are serious issues and have not been assisted by the Minister scrapping the highly successful Skilling Queenslanders for Work program that supported 27,000 job seekers each year and delivered a greater return in tax receipts to the State Government than the program cost.

The rise in the unemployment rate and the decline in the proportion of Queenslanders looking for work seriously impacts on Queensland's productivity and economic growth.

The Minister's dismissal of this issue as either not his responsibility or mere statistics for the Treasurer shows that he is either a Minister for 'Employment' in name only or at least the worst Minister for Employment in a decade.

### **Minister for Science, IT, Innovation and The Arts**

The Opposition was primarily concerned with the lack of clarity surrounding responsibility within government for IT projects, the loss of jobs that will occur as the government transitions to an 'IT as a service' delivery model, the sale of CITEC and the lack of new investment in science and innovation by the Newman Government.

#### ***Information Technology***

Unlike his predecessor at last year's estimates hearing, the Minister was able to advise the committee that he was the Minister ultimately responsible for all IT projects across government. Notwithstanding the fact that the Minister accepted overall responsibility, there is still some confusion surrounding when responsibility for an IT project transfers from the line agency managing that project to the Minister and his department. The Minister described the model that would be established under the government's new IT strategy as follows:

*"...the best word for it is a federated model. My department will certainly take the lead, but we do not know the best solution for the business of each individual department and there is a role for that department to satisfy its business needs as it thinks best."<sup>1</sup>*

The Minister further advised that he would also be responsible for the success or failure of high-risk IT projects across government. By way of clarification, the Director-General was able to define 'high-risk' projects as those with a monetary

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<sup>1</sup> Page 63.

value of more than \$2 million, although cost would not be the sole determining factor in all cases. The Minister also advised that disputes about the progress of high-risk IT projects between his Department and line agencies responsible for developing the projects would be able to be resolved by Cabinet.

The Opposition does not consider that the lines of responsibility or reporting that are being proposed are sufficiently clear. Although the \$2m threshold provides some clarity for when the Minister and his department will assume responsibility for risky IT projects, there is still confusion surrounding the responsibility for cheaper or low-risk IT initiatives.

In relation to jobs, the Opposition questioned the Newman Government's acceptance of the Costello Report recommendations that will lead to further job losses in the public service. The Minister was asked how many jobs would be lost as a result of the government's acceptance of recommendation 149 to sell CITEC within two years. The Minister was unable to provide any clarity or assurance that the decision to sell CITEC would not result in further job losses.

In the past and again at the Estimates Hearing, the Minister has tried to assure both government and non-government IT workers that there would be plenty of jobs in the private IT sector in Queensland as a result of the Queensland Government's increasing needs to contract IT services. However, when confronted with a recent report indicating that Telstra would be sending IT jobs currently in Australia to India, the Minister could not guarantee that IT jobs, once outsourced from the public to the private sector, would remain in Australia. Additionally, the Minister would not guarantee that the government would not directly contract with overseas operators itself when acquiring IT services in the future.

### ***Science and Innovation***

At the Estimates Hearing, the Minister was presented with a briefing note written by his department for his predecessor in October 2012 which stated that there was no new science funding in the last financial year. The Minister was unable to adequately explain whether there was any new investment in science by the Newman Government, which is a cause of great concern to the Opposition and Queenslanders more broadly.

The Minister confirmed in a question posed to him that only \$60.724 million is budgeted for Science Delivery Services by his department in 13-14 which represents a cut of almost \$6 million since last year. This was purportedly because of ongoing restructures and organisational savings but the Minister did confirm that some projects had ceased because of the funding cuts.

The Minister was also asked about intellectual property (IP) and whether an audit had been conducted into the IP owned by the Queensland Government and whether a sufficient return was being achieved on that IP. The Minister and his officials confirmed that these matters were being investigated but that the work was not completed. No time frame for the completion of that work was given.

The Minister was asked about the Wastewater Tracking and Electronic Reporting System and the involvement that his department had had in the mine water releases conducted by the Newman Government. The Minister's officials were able to confirm that the Department had provided advice on the design of the monitoring program as well as undertaking some of the monitoring. As the release of mine water and the impact that such releases can potentially have on water quality is of significant concern to Queenslanders the Opposition will continue to scrutinise the government's actions in this area to ensure that any mine water releases are safe and do not have a detrimental impact on the natural environment.

Although the Minister engaged more constructively and professionally with the estimates process and the issues in his portfolio than his predecessor did last year, the Opposition still hold some significant concerns in the areas identified above. We will continue to closely monitor these issues and other matters within the portfolio for further developments and will continue to hold the government and the Minister to account.

## **Arts**

It is clear that the impact of the former Arts Minister's poor leadership and contempt for Queensland's Arts sector continues to be felt throughout this year's budget. The previous Arts Minister's vilification of the arts sector and deep cuts to community arts programs has left Minister Walker with a heavy burden to shoulder. This is evident across the whole arts sector, but particularly clear when it comes to the absence of foreign film investment in Queensland last financial year.

### Cuts continue

It is concerning to see that the 2013-2014 arts budget continues to withdraw financial support from the sector after the drastic cuts undertaken in the 2012-2013 budget by the Newman LNP Government. This is evident in answer to Estimates Question on Notice Number 6, which shows an increase in the savings targets for Arts grants and subsidies from 0.526 million last year to 3.193 million during this financial year.

### No foreign film investment

During the hearing, the Minister revealed the startling revelation that there was no foreign film project investment in Queensland last year. This is a dramatic decline from a six-year average of \$52 million a year, to \$21 million in 2011-2012 to zero in the last financial year.

There is no doubt that the previous Arts Minister's denigration of Queensland's creative industries and the Premier's axing of the Queensland Literary Awards not only damaged our State's reputation as an international arts destination but also announced far and wide that Queensland no longer values a creative culture and creative industries. Clearly, much work needs to be done to rebuild confidence in Queensland's arts sector.

### Arts grants – all talk, no action

I note the Minister's emphasis on grant funding to the arts and his response to a government question regarding funding from the Federal Government and his insistence that Queensland artists seek Australia Council funding.

It is incredibly hypocritical for the Minister to criticise the Federal Government for their arts investment in Queensland after the Newman LNP Government ripped millions of dollars out of local arts projects.

It is also concerning to note that while the Minister is spruiking that more artists and groups should apply for funding, there is only one officer within the Department of Science, IT, Innovation and the Arts at an A07 level to deal with grant funding and strengthen the entrepreneurial capacity of the arts and cultural sector, as outlined in the *Arts for All Queenslanders* plan.

If indeed the Minister's emphasis is on increasing grants funding, then more resources should be allocated to this task. Allocating one A07 officer to provide assistance and advice to Queensland arts sector to mitigate the severe cuts in State Government funding is not a strategy for the sector and it's insulting that any Minister should laude this as a significant achievement.

### Lack of transparency

During the estimates hearing the Arts Minister indicated that *"the government is certainly committed to improving the level of service that we provide to the public"*. However, this statement is in stark contrast to the Minister's actions when he has, by his own admission, discontinued 42 performance measures across the arts budget papers.

As a result of the Minister's aversion to transparency, the following data will no longer be available in a comprehensive format in the Service Delivery Statement for public scrutiny:

#### ***Library Board of Queensland***

1. Growth of State collection
2. Visits to the State Library – Onsite
3. Visits to the State Library – Online
4. Usage of the State collection and subscription databases
5. Usage of the Queensland public libraries lending collection
6. Participants in public programs
7. Total borrowing from public libraries
8. Percentage of grants to regional Queensland
9. Percentage of Indigenous communities with a library service

#### ***Queensland Art Gallery***

1. Number of exhibitions presented

2. Total attendance at Queensland Art Gallery and Gallery of Modern Art
3. Number of website user sessions
4. Number of regional locations receiving exhibitions, programs, education, interpretative, and information services

### ***Queensland Museum***

1. Number of physical items added to the State Collection
2. Number of digital items added to State collection
3. Total physical campus visits
4. School children visiting campuses
5. Online visits
6. New displays (sq metres of exhibitions)
7. Lectures, public talks, workshops and outreach programs delivered
8. Number of research paper published
9. Number of Queensland Museum collection objects accessed for research, education, exhibition and cultural purposes
10. Participants in lectures, public talks, workshops and outreach programs
11. Number of popular research publications sold and distributed
12. Percentage of the collection that is stored to a national benchmark standard
13. Percentage of Local Government Authorities receiving Queensland Museum services

### ***Queensland Performing Arts Trust***

1. Level of hirer satisfaction
2. Visitation
3. Attendance at paid events
4. Attendance at unpaid events
5. Presentations Number of performances
6. Number of sessions
7. Number of regional venues receiving QPAC programming
8. Number of programs hosted by regional venues

### ***Department***

1. Level of attendance and participation in subsidised arts sector events
2. Percentage of grant funding informed by industry peer assessment
3. Percentage of grants approvals processed within required timeframes
4. Percentage of grant acquittals processed within required timeframes
5. Percentage of funding provided to people from target groups
6. Proportion of funding allocated to arts, arts workers and non-government arts and cultural organisations
7. Utilisation of state-owned arts and cultural facilities

For a Government that purports to be evidence-based in its approach to policy and funding – this is a serious backwards step.

## Lower standards

It is also concerning that of the performance measures that do remain, most of them have reduced target rates from the 2012-2013 actual to the 2013-2014 estimate. Clearly, the Newman Government is content with aiming low, which will ultimately result in poorer outcomes.

Organisations such as the Library Board of Queensland should be praised for increasing their targeted client satisfaction with services and programs target, from the 2012-2013 target to the 2012-2013 actual, by encouraging them to do better. Instead their target for 2013-2014 has been reduced, lower than the estimated target for 2012-2013 from 95% to 80%.

As previously mentioned, the reduction in performance targets can be seen throughout the Service Delivery Statement for the Arts, from the Library Board of Queensland, the Queensland Art Gallery, elements of the Queensland Performing Arts Trust, to the Queensland Museum which has seen no move in their targeted and actual satisfaction of audience with museum experiences from 2012-2013 to 2013-2014.

It is deeply worrying that Minister Walker is not encouraging our major performing arts and cultural spaces to strive for their best and is instead continuing the legacy of the former Minister by setting lower standards in the delivery of creative services and programs.



**Desley Scott MP**  
**Member for Woodridge**